

A Watch-word to the Army, and all Counties, Cities, and Garisons in England :

From London the twentieth of October, 1648. To prepare and fix all the Well-affected in all places, to be in a readiness to preserve themselves from that bondage and ruine which is coming swiftly on them.

Deer and true-hearted Friends,

WE all now evidently see with open eyes the combination of the Grandees in Parliament and Army, either with the King, and by the Treaty; or without him, and by perpetuating this Parl. to enslave us; or if we shall be too stubborn to endure that, then to destroy, or thrust us out of the Land: To make way for which their wicked purposes, the Council consisting of the Adjutors, was tyrannously dissolved and broken in pieces, and for this end was the Committee of Darby-house erected and composed of such, as in their hearts hate and abominate us: for this end were those traiterous members continued in Parl. who proclaimed a war against the present Army, and voted the King to London, and by whose accursed policies they procured a Personal Treaty with him: for this end the Navie and command at Sea was taken out of the custody of Col. Rainborough, and put into the hands of the Earl of Warwick, our resolved adversary; and for this end is the Militia in all Counties voted to be entrusted into the hands of such only as can dispend 150. l. per annum, purposely to keep it out of the hands of any that shew any countenance at all to us.

We all know in what state we stand, with all Lords, Judges, Lawyers, and Clergy, and how ready they are to devour us, if once this Army were disbanded; and whereas formerly our hopes lay much upon a Parl. now none are so hated and despised there, as we are: all our labours and endeavours to rectifie them by Petitions, comes to nothing; nay far worse, our Petitions (which we doubt not ye have seen, and which we nor you shall ever be ashamed to own) are despised by them, our persons reviled and reproachfully used, whilst in the mean time they give large gifts, offices, and good bargains amongst themselves, their sons, kinred, and friends, and continue Tythes, Excise, Taxes, Monopolies, and all other corruptions and oppressions, and are resolved to continue the present Parl. purposely to continue these, and to devise new oppressions, they palpably pervert the end of all victories, to the bondage of the victors; and stifle all the discoveries of Scots and English Traytors in the late rising and invasion, because they are guilty themselves, and are in hope, and daily employ their utmost endeavours to corrupt the Officers of the Army so far, as to make them serve these their most wicked Intentions: and certainly have prevailed too much among some of them, otherwise they would not be so silent as they are, seeing all things run violently quite contrary to the ends of the late engagements, promises, and declarations of the Army; nor would they otherwise think the blood and danger of the souldier, deserved a less price than the freedom of the Nation.]

And therefore friends, it behooves us to look about us, and to be-stir our selves to purpose, and that speedily, effectually, and orderly, as being surrounded with dangers; for encouragement wherein, we are to consider, that our lives, liberties, wives, children, and the just cause we have ventured all for, ly all at stake, and are in more danger now than ever. Let us therefore resolve (as becometh men to whom God hath given understanding for this very end) to put our selves into such a wel-compacted posture, that we may be able to make good unto our selves and the whole Nation, those just liberties, and that ~~comprison~~ from oppression which we have long time in vain expected from the Parl. and that in procuring thereof, we may be in a condition to defend one another, whensoever, or which way soever we shall be assaulted or endangered: we must resolve not to look upon Parl. or other authorities, nor upon Armies, as they have bin formed under strict disciplines; by all which, instead of being delivered from an old, we have brought in a new and more heavie bondage, nor to look upon mens persons, offices, honours, places, or former successes.

But since we have bin so extremely deceived, and thereby so exceedingly endangered, we must betake ourselves to the prime laws of nature, as the Army did, and upon the like grounds were constrained to do

do, and to declare in June 1647. and neither regard authorities or persons further, then as they intend the general good and freedom of the Common-wealth, and persevere therein without such stops and back-slidings, as too too many to their own shame and our prejudice have bin subject to; if they can lose their integrity and sincerity towards us, as very many in the Parl. and some in the Army are known to have done, if they now after all victories, obtained through Gods blessing upon the faithfulness of the souldiers, and affection of the people, make no conscience of tampering with the King our most implacable enemy, or of setting up themselves, and advancing a particular Interest, and perpetuating this Parl. which they have seemed in their Declarations so much to abhor; if instead of a remedy against the oppressions of the King, this Parl. hath brought upon us ten-fold more, and if instead of being delivered from those oppressions, by the over-rulers of the Army, as they made you and us believe they would, and if whilst they have destroyed the work intended by the Adjutors, we are reduced from one degree of misery and danger to another, and are now in a worse condition then ever; shall we now be so foolish as to make scruple of with-drawing our Trust, or of making use of any means we can compass for our preservation.

No, dear friends, if we now after so long a waiting upon Traitors, dissemblers, and oppressors, should still persist to trust them, till they had brought us into such a straight, as we were deprived of all means to help our selves, and should then, with our dear Country, wives, and children, families, friends, and neighbours, be enslaved and destroyed at their pleasure, should we not be guilty of self murder, and the destruction of one another? would not the children that are, and those that are unborn, have cause to curse us? O therefore dear friends, let us all in all places joyntly lay it to heart, and before it be too late, (which it will be suddenly) let us unite our Counsels, our strengths, and all our abilities together, as one man, and resolve to live or dy free, as we were born, and as of right belongs unto us both by birth and purchase, being redeemed out of the jaws and claws of tyrants, by the vast effusion of the blood of our dear Hain friends and Countrymen: let us not now be either flattered, affrighted, or deluded into bondage, and thereby become the mockery of the whole world, and be hated of our selves, wives, children, and friends for ever. And yet what loss are we at present? for our parts, we dare scarce open our mouths in this City of London, or places adjacent, against this most perfidious and trecherous Treaty with the King, and if this yet be countenanced by some sort of Parl. men, who have a mind to weed him out, to make way for their own domination, yet to such as those dare we not utter one syllable against the continuance of this Parliament, nor will they hear or endure a word about ascertaining the supreme Authority in the house of Commons, or of reducing the Lords to reason, or any thing against the Excise, tythes, monopolies, or unjust taxes: no, as godly as they would appear by their zeal against the King, yet he that insists upon the particulars of the large Petition, presented upon the 11. of Sept, last, which we hope you have seen and considered, appears even to these as their greatest enemies, and upon the least trip of their tongue are in danger of Darby house Committee, which in time will prove no less a vexation to honest true Common-wealth-men, than the High-Commission, Star-Chamber, and Counsel-Table.

We profess unto you, it is already so with us, that we meet with a great deal of fear and care, if we have any publique busines or petitions to consult about, and are faine to shift from place to place, every fawning dissembler, and malicious varlet being countenanced as an Informer, and a new officer called a Povolt, martial is authorised to watch over us, more than over the most desperate Malignants.

And you our friends in the Country, we hear are in as bad or worse condition, by the malice and trechery of your Committees, and great neighbours, so that both your and our dangers increase continually.

And you our friends in the Army, are (for ought we hear) in as bad a condition as either. Possibly you may be allowed to speak somewhat freely against the Personal Treaty, but you dare not move one another that something may be done by the Army against it; and if you fall into discourse of the Armys engagement at Triplo-heath, and seem to be grieved that the Council of the Adjutors are destroyed, are ye not faine to run into corners to do it? dares any one openly demand a reason of his Officer why the Adjutors were supplanted before there were satisfaction given in point of arrears, indemnity, and security to the liberties of the Nation? dare any one go into some open place, and publicly read the

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first papers and declarations of the Army? is not every of you both private officers and souldiers, in danger of being sentenced to be shot to death, for things less material than these? what an imperious people are some of your Officers become, that have bin raised from a very mean condition, more by your bloud and valour than by their own worth, yet now you can scarce look them in the faces, or but speak to them concerning the ends of your engagement, but you are in danger of a council.

They keep you purposely poor and without mony, that ye might not be able to passe from Regiment to Regiment, or from Company to Company, to break your minds one to another; and none have any preferment or countenance from them, but flatterers and tale-bearers, who are observed to be seldom without mony. In one word, Some of your Officers have a long time endeavoured to make your Army a meer mercenary thing, without any the least use of Conscience, and in effect absolute slaves to the wills of your Commanders, and their confederates in Parliament and Darby house, which was the cause of the over-throw of the Adjutators, who are a people raised in opposition to all kind of Tyrants; for what are ye now become but as a meer Low Countrey Army, or an Army of Switzers, that fight and kill men for mony, and to establish and make great your Officers and Commanders? If it be otherwise, wherein appears it? In what Army is there stricter or more Tyrannous Discipline? as witnesseth the Souldier shot to death at Ware; and many others a little after sentenced at Windsor, for their zealous publike affection, and for insisting upon your joynt engagement. If you are never so much provoked by your Officers and you but speak a hasty word, some censure or other is sure to attend you; and if they do not alwaies execute according to the severitie of their censures, it is not for your sakes, but for their own, as knowing if they should, you would not long bear their crueltie. But you must note, by this means you are enured to bear their Censures, by which they mould and fashion you by degrees (like politique Tyrants) to such a degree of Bondage, that upon your least trip against one of their Tyrannous Articles of Warre, you ly at their mercy.

What a strong fetch had they to fasten a hook in Mr *Thompson* at White Hall, sentencing him to death, for a Spy? O shamelesse impudence! when it was but to wreke a private spleen against him. And how vilely dealt they with those Gent. of the Life-guard, with Cap. *Renolls*, and others about his busines? and now after all dissembled Recantations and Repentances, how unworthily did they sentence four honest Troopers to death, about a distaste they took at the malignancy of their Captain.

They could as easily procure you monies as kisse their hands; for the Parliament will doe any thing they desire; but they know if ye had mony, you would come amongst us, and other your friends, that we might advise together for our Liberties: and they discountenance all sorts of men from visiting the Head-quarters, except claw-backs and intelligencers, such formalists as shall share with them in their Tyranny: and by their dealing with *Thompson* as a Spy, they suppose they have terrified all men from remaining in any of your quarters, to give information or Intelligence of their purposes; so that they keep you as poor and as ignorant, and in as much awe as is possible, that they make you their meer servants, slaves and vassals: and keep your mony to stop your mouths withall, when you shall at any time cry out for your and our Liberties; an Engine that they much rely on. And why else is it they keep you so farre asunder one Regiment from another? Or why so few together in one place, but that all your discourses and discontents and fears might not be communicated to one another; and in the mean time ye are visited with such flattering Sycophants as use to tell you when you call upon them for the performance of your engagements to the people, that it is not yet seasonable, stay till such a busines be over, and till such a danger be past; and then you shall see all things done according to your hearts desire: such as when good things are mentioned, are used to bid you beware, there is more in it than you imagine, that there is a danger: us dignie lies in the bottome of it, that some Iesuite drives it on, that the things are excellent good in themselves, but the Authors are men of dangerous principles, and the like gulleries; by which you and we and all your friends in England are brought to the very brink of destruction,

or where now after all their hypocritical promises, and prudential delays, are those good things, which the only would do? When hath been their season of making good to you and the people, those Liberties and

and Freedoms from Oppressions and Oppressors which they so largely promised and protested in the name of the whole Army? What now is become of all their deceitful expedients and cautions, upon pretence whereof they have put you beside your good resolutions, and blasted so many excellent things, and lost so many fair opportunities of making us all a free and happy people? Truly Friends, their delusions, cruelties and hypocrisies have been so evident, and their confederacies and treacheries against you and us so palpable; that with us their day of dissimulation is past: And if Mr *Saltmarsh* could have procured beleef amongst you, it had been long since past also with you.

But both you and we have contracted, and are guilty of a most hainous sin against God, and think not of it, we have been and are too too apt to idolize men, for such and no lesse than idolatry, is our affection when mis-placed and mis-applied: we love, respect, and obey men all alike, when they do evil, as when they do well, which in effect is to call evil good, and good evil; whereas we ought to deal justly and impartially: and when men that are in place and authoritie turn deceivers, tyrants, hypocrites, and oppressors; we ought to account of them as the vilest of men, how rich, honourable, and powerful soever they are in the worlds esteem; and though we have adhered to them, and followed them for many years, yet when they forsake the waies that are right, we ought to forsake them; and if they have betaken themselves to waies of treacherie and crueltie, we ought and are bound in Conscience to bring them to Iustice; and if they have gotten Iustice at their beck through their pollicies and the times corruption, you ought to destroy them as professed enemies of mankind, and breakers of all human society.

But instead hereof, if you have followed a Commander in any dangerous service, and you come off with credit; you cry him up in such a manner, that the man presently thinks himself more than a man, vauing that which had never been done but by you, and by your ten times more hazzard than his, in such sort as if by his own single valour and wisdom it had been atchieved, and thence forwards esteems himself according to your estimation: and instead of making use of this your good opinion for your good, turns it most ungratefully to delude, betray and enslave you, and is indeed a man of no true vertue at all, nor never undertook any action of worth, but out of covetousnes or vain glory; nor ever regarded you more than as so many Charging-horses. This you ought to consider and amend as an error that doth abundance of mischief amongst you.

Friends it is no time to dally, or longer to delude your selves, or to suffer your selves to be deluded by the most religiously-seeming hipocrite that is: both you and we must hence forth judge men only by the publik good they do constantly, by their perseverance in good; and must cease to be so superstitiously, cowardly and base, as not to dare to take an Idol by the beard; such is greatnes without goodnes: to uncase a Fox, such are hipocrites; and to destroy a ravenous Lion, such are open Tyrants where-ever we find them.

What a miserable shame is it that you who have not feared to meet any the most powerful enemy in open fields, should yet not dare to speak your minds to your Commanders in an open Court, but suffer them by long speeches and zealous protestations, to gull you to your faces from time to time?

But you will be apt to say, What can we do? If men of our Condition shew our selves opposite to them, they'll wait us a mischief, and upon the least trip of our tongue be taken as Mutineers, as men dividing the Army, and driving on dangerous designes; and then are sure to be judged by those whom we have offended, and to sentence men to death is counted nothing; and no escaping by any other means, but by the mercy of his adversaries, which to an honest man that hath a mans heart is worse than death.

Seriously Friends, this is a very hard and slavish condition, and no help for it but one: and that is what soldiers of lesse understanding have used in this Nation too; and that is in such unreasonable cases wherein your Officers have (for terror unto you all) exercised their cruel sentences: you are to consider that the greater number may easily hang or shoot the lesse; and if you should use this just discipline upon all occasions only, and upon no other, which you can soon judge; you would find your Officers lesse subject to such distempers, and more pleyable to satisfie you in all things that are just.

But the Truth is, they are grown to a great head, and presume exceedingly upon your sicknesses and easines to be deceived, and upon your fear and dread of their Councils: and so also are our Gentlemen in Parliament: Indeed almost every Parliament man is transported beyond himself, and we live

reason to beleve that they are agreed with the Grandees of the Armie to perpetuate the Parliament, that so the Parliament may perpetuate those Officers of the Army, (that are most likely to corrupt the Army) Whereas they and all persons in authoritie had need to be changed at least every year, that they may taste of subjection as well as rule; which was once thought reasonable by your Officers: as their Declarations will one day testifie, unto their shame and horror.

And by this Conjunction let the House do what it will, they shall be accountable only to one another: and let the great ones of the Army do what they will to the little ones, they have none above them, that dare call them to account, and so they shall be accountable only to themselves, and shall be sole Judges and compromisers of all things. But this friends, they cannot do, except you assent; and we trust you will never suffer your selves so far to betray the liberties of your dear Country, as to second or further so abominable a work.

No, rather dear friends, Let us set our selves immediately to prevent both the mischief intended by the Treaty, and the tyrannie contracted by this unnatural conjunction of the Grandees of the Presbiters and Independent, who under the notion and pretence of uniting the Godly partie in all places, yea in both Nations, intend to make us slaves to themselves, and a perpetual Parliament: for what possible union can there be between those who are persecutors for Conscience and Religion, (such professedly are the Grandees of the Presbiters) and between those that are Non-persecutors, (such would the Grandees of the Independent be thought?) inasmuch as their union is meerly polittick, and they are but dissemblers on both parties; for were they really religious and true to their principles: Christ and Belial, God and Mammon could as soon unite, as a persecuter and non-persecuter; so as that which to deceive both you and us, is called the uniting of all the Godly partie in both Nations, is indeed the uniting of all the polittique hypocrites in both nations, that take upon them the shew of this opinion, and that way of Religion for no other end but to be able to delude and mislead those that are really conscientious; and are resolved either to hold up the King, and under his interest to domineer over the people, or to maintain the usurped domination of the Lords, joyned with the power of a perpetual House of Commons, against the just Liberties of the people: which they are resolved by one means or other to withhold from them, and to keep them ignorant of (if it be possible for ever.

And thats the true cause why the Sectaries and Leveller is by both parties made odious, just in the same manner as the Courtiers and Bishops dealt with the Puritans, meerly because they sought after their Liberties; the which very tricks these Grandees use to a hair, and are become skilful therein, inasmuch as the Prelates were never more bitter against the Puritan, nor the Presbyter against the Independent, then these new hypocrites are against the Sectaries and Levellers. No libertie can be insisted on, no good thing in motion, no evil or corrupt proceeding found fault withal, no just Petition presented, but the polittick Grandee Presbyter cries out, These Sectaries will never be quiet. And the polittick Grandee Independent, he cries as loud, That these are the Levellers: But in the mean time where are the Liberties and just Freedoms of the Common wealth? Why in the Parliament they are continually voted to death, and in the Army they are sentenced and shot to death, by the treacherous confederacy of this Grandee faction, and which you and we must set all our strengths to, suddenly and effectually to break in peeces, or both you and we and the whole Nation shall be the most vile and miserable slave in the world.

To which just and necessary work, we have here conferred together amongst our selves, and with discreet friends of many Counties, and also with faithfull and resolved friends ~~of several~~ Regiments of the Army, and we all agreed,

1. That all those right hearted people who inhabite in and about the City of London (whereof blessed be God there are many thousands) shall keep themselves in a quiet posture of defence, and be very watchful over the motions and proceedings of the adverse parties, and give true and speedy intelligence thereof to our friends in the Army, and all Counties, Cities, and Garrisons: and by holding councils, be able and in a readiness to come together in an instant; in all which we are well provided already, and shall not fail of performance.

2. That all those who are cordial friends in all Counties, Cities, and Garrisons, shall not keep them-

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selves in a good posture of defence, and be always in a readiness to come together in an instant; and for that end, to communicate counsels and intelligence one with another, as far as is possible, and with the City and Army.

3. That every Regiment in the Army and Garisons, upon the 10 day of the ensuing November shall not to chuse Adjutators, neither beginning nor making any shew thereof before, nor deferring it a day longer, if it be possible; and if any Officer shall dissent, then to cashier such officer: if any shall violently oppose, whether Soldier or Officer of what degree soever, then and in such case, to secure in safe custody such officer or soldier, and to be sure to chuse such persons onely, as are neither covetous, nor fear the faces of men in a just cause.

All these are agreed and expected to be done and completed upon the tenth day aforesaid: and if in doing thereof any one part either in City, County, Army, or Garison shall be disturbed or any waies endangered by any force, then in such case, that all who have any power or ability of any nature, do extend themselves to the relief, succour, and rescue of all persons that shall be any waies molested or interrupted.

4. That Adjutators being chosen, they be impowered to recover, by all the means they can, the Army out of that slavish condition wherein it is; and likewise to procure the Freedom, Peace, and Prosperity of the Common-wealth; and for those just ends, to suffer no disbanding of any cordial forces, and to get a general rendezvous with all possible speed.

5. Being so impowred, it is thought requisite and agreed, that the Adjutators chuse out of themselves, four such persons as they shall judge meet, that we of these parts appoint four the ablest we can chuse, and that each other City and County chuse two, and each Garison one; and that all those shall meet and continue together, and be a Council, to consider, consult, and act, for the obtaining of the particulars contained in the Petition presented to the House of Commons upon the 11. of Sept. last: And this Council shall certainly meet together in some place near unto, or in the Army, as the Adjutators shall advise, upon the twentieth of November next, and not before, nor be deferred past that day.

6. That if within fifteen daies after the said twentieth of November, the House of Commons, (who have then sate full eight years) shall not set themselves to establish the particulars contained in the fore-mentioned Petition, and to provide for truly well-affected Parliaments for the future (that so after this, we may not as Scotland did, fall into the hands of a malignant Parliament) then that all men in all places be protected in with-holding and refusing to pay Excise, and all other taxes unto them; and in denying obedience to any their Votes, Orders, or Ordinances, there being no injustice or tyranny comparable to that of so corrupt and usurping a Parliament.

7. That then immediately the said Council do provide an agreement, to be called an Agreement of the People, containing just Liberties, and exemption from all oppression to all men, so far as will stand with the security and firm continuance of the said Agreement, against the malice of secret or open enemies, wherein the government of this Nation, by Parliaments yearly chosen, and of course, shall be included, together with the preservation of propriety, and of all interests, so far as will consist with an equal and just government: and being agreed unto by the known well-affected in all Counties, Cities, Army, and Garisons, it being in vain to expect the concurrence of malignants, persecutors, or of persons confederated into factions, whose Principles and practises in behalf of tyranny, and to enslave themselves and the whole Nation, makes them (until they are better informed and resolved) incapable of their native right: the same shall be and remain an unalterable rule of government to this Nation for ever, and all things therein contained and expressed, shall be out of the power of Parliaments to alter or make void.

To all these we are agreed, and have bound our selves each to other by all obligations of affection, to send this discourse to all Counties, Cities, Regiments, Companies, and Garisons in England and Wales, and in most earnest manner to press a sensibility thereof, upon the spirits of every particular person that hath any spark of publike good affection in him: and therefore we entreat you all, to whom the sight hereof shall come, that you neither sleep nor slumber upon it, but that immediately you bestow all your endeavours to see the same observed, and all things done, and in a readiness, exactly upon the very

very daies prescribed: the which if you do, assure your selves there is no power in this Nation that can prevent you of your just desires.

And if there be yet any goodness remaining in any Parliament men, assure your selves they will rejoyce in nothing more then in this undertaking, and will second and assist you with their persons and estates.

And as for those Officers in the Army that are for publike Freedom, and not engaged in Factions and Parties; you shall certainly discover their good affection by this your proceeding; and they never more gladly went before you in any service, then they will lead you in this, as being the ultimate end of all their services; freeing them from the guilt of Muntherers and robbers, which nothing but a just cause can do: And this also will be a means to purge out of your Army and Societies, all ambitious, covetous, and trecherous Officers, by whose wickedness the credit of the Army hath bin betrayed, and all the hopes of the people upon you, utterly frustrate; and by this will you regain the love and affection of all sorts of people, and hereby you, and we, and all who mind the Commons good, shall be strengthened and firmly united against all opposition, and above all, we may justly hope for a blessing from God upon our endeavours, because herein we endeavour to discharge that duty which lieth upon all Christians, in delivering the Captive, and setting an oppressed Nation free.

Therefore dear friends, let not profit, pleasure, favour, or terror, with-hold us from doing our duties herein, ardently, vigorously, and courageously, and as you proceed, give notice to the hands that sends this, or to some cordial person, (that is none of the disputers of these times) and what you do, do very privately, until the day of working be come, and then be as open as the day, wise as serpents, innocent as Doves, bold as Lions, harmless as lambs; and the blessing of God be upon us in all things, as we really mind the general good and peace of the Common-wealth.

Postscript,

IF you to whom these shall come, be a Citizen, you are to impart it not onely to all well-affected persons of your own condition, but also to all right harted Souldiers, Regiments, Companies, and Garisons: And so likewise if you are a Country-man: And if you are a Souldier, then you are to possess all Citizens and Country-Friends, as well as all Souldiers, with the scope and purpose hereof; And this you are intreated to do instantly, with unwearied diligence, sparing no pains nor travel night nor day, until the work be perfected:

Vpon this dependeth all the work.